

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER COMMENTS ON STATE OF THE ARMY AND
LIKELIHOOD OF WAR WITH TURKEY

1. IN THE COURSE OF A PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE ON OCTOBER 31, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AVEROFF REPLIED TO A QUESTION BY CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES DEPUTY BANTOUVAS (CRETE) REGARDING THE STATUS OF DEJUNTIZATION IN THE ARMED FORCES. FOCUSING ON A SPECIFIC ALLUSION BY BANTOUVAS THAT SONS OF SOME JUNTA LEADERS ARE NOW SERVING AS ACTIVE DUTY OFFICERS IN THE ARMED FORCES, AVEROFF BOTH ADMITTED THE FACT AND STATED IN ADDITION THAT HE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THEIR ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION BECAUSE OF THEIR FAMILY TIES.

2. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE AIR FORCE CADET, WHO WAS CASHIERED FROM THE SERVICE BECAUSE OF HIS PRAISE OF THE DICTATORSHIP, AVEROFF STATED THAT THE OTHER SONS OF JUNTA LEADERS IN QUESTION WERE PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES WELL
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AND THERE WERE NO GROUNDS FOR SUSPECTING THEM OF DISLOYAL

ACTIVITIES. SPECIFICALLY CITING THE CASE OF THE SON OF IOANNIS LADAS (ONE OF THE FORMER JUNTA'S INNER CIRCLE), AVEROFF DESCRIBED HIM AS AN EXCELLENT AND LOYAL OFFICER. AVEROFF POINTED OUT THAT "GREECE IS A DEMOCRACY" AND, ACCORDINGLY, DOES NOT DEMAND THAT "CHILDREN PAY FOR THE SINS OF THEIR PARENTS."

3. AVEROFF THEN MADE SOME GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARMED FORCES, ESPECIALLY AT THE CURRENT TIME IN VIEW OF THE STATE OF RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. HE STATED THAT, "AS I HAVE SAID PREVIOUSLY I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WAR WILL OCCUR." HE INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PEACE ARE FAR GREATER THAN THOSE FOR WAR BUT ADMITTED THAT NEVERTHELESS WAR IS "SOMETHING WHICH WE CANNOT EXCLUDE." IN VIEW OF THIS, AVEROFF NOTED, "WE HAVE THE NEED FOR THE FULL STRENGTH OF THE ARMY TO THE VERY LAST MAN SO THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO FACE THE WORST SHOULD IT OCCUR." AVEROFF THEN POINTED OUT THAT IN ADDITION TO THE STRENGTH OF THE ARMY, THE BEST QUARANTEE AGAINST THE POSSIBLE OUTBREAK OF WAR IS THE FACT THAT "THE OTHERS KNOW THAT WE ARE BOTH OF ONE MIND AND UNITED."

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